

Teaching with Technology

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Born in 1976 of Cuban parents, who immigrated to Illinois, Roxana Hadad, graduated from Hinsdale South High School near Chicago, Illinois. The following year, she attended the University of Illinois, majoring in English Literature and Spanish. Not yet thirty years of age, Roxana Hadad has already contributed immensely to the state of Illinois and its educational system. Each day, she continues to put her efforts towards helping today's youth through technology, communications, and personal dedication.

While working towards her degree from 1997 to 1999, Hadad developed the University of Illinois's first online student Spanish course. During this time, she realized she wanted to make a difference by combining her knowledge of education with modern technology. By September 2000, Roxana had applied to New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program, in the Tisch School of Arts. While participating in this program, she also worked as an intern at the Collaboratory located at Northwestern Illinois University. Here, she applied her knowledge with enthusiasm to create a program for children, helping them learn and interpret foreign languages.

As the instructional designer for *LexiTown*, she managed, designed, and programmed this curriculum for the Illinois Board of Education. *LexiTown* is an online foreign language website that is accessible to any student. Through animated computer images, students participate in various activities which help them learn to listen, speak, read, and write in a second language. Several projects are made available to help children understand the cultures and languages of targeted countries. With the majority

of the focus directed towards students and classrooms in Illinois, nationally as well as internationally, *LexiTown* has been utilized, greatly.

Recently, Hadad traveled to Durango, Mexico with the Youth Technology Corps' students, from five schools in the Chicago area. She introduced them to *LexiTown* and the Northwestern Collaboratory Project so that they would be able to converse through web technology, and explore language art.

In her free time, Roxana works as a freelance illustrator and animator. She also enjoys volunteering at the Children's Memorial Hospital, and with the Youth Technology Corps. Because of her hard work and dedication, she was recognized as a Macromedia Education Leader and also received a New York University Graduate and Professional Opportunity Fellow award. As a result of her fluency in Spanish and bicultural background, the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts Fellow honored Roxana for her achievements.

Roxana's mother has had an enormous impact on Roxana's love of education. Her mother helped her realize the importance of educating and guiding children to pursue their dreams. For nearly thirty years, she taught kindergarten as a bilingual teacher in the Chicago Public School district. Mrs. Hadad still shows great interest in her students and truly enjoys her job. Roxana also realizes that she has been blessed with having many wonderful teachers throughout her life, who have contributed to her love of learning. Now, she is sharing this love with other children.

Roxana has become very involved with her students and committed to her career. She constantly expands her knowledge in the field of education and technology, while encouraging today's youth to put forward a full effort in all of their endeavors. She has

had a major impact on the educational system in Illinois and on the lives of many children throughout the country. Roxana is truly an inspiration as well as a mentor and role model. [From student historian's email correspondence with Roxana Hadad, Sept. 7 and 13, 2005; "The Roxana Hadad Website, Resume," <http://directory.northwestern.edu/?query=roaxana+hadad> (Sept. 1, 2005; "The Collaboratory Project, Homepage," www.roxanahadad.com/hadad_resume.pdf (Sept. 21, 2005); and "Macromedia Education Leaders Program," www.macromedia.com/resources/education/k12/special/leaders/profiles/rhadad.html (Aug. 30, 2005).]